

No Mistakes

By

Rev. Sheryl Stewart

Genesis 29: 15-28

Romans 8: 26-39 Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52

Psalm 128

Summary: Life can confuse us, but it is not what we make of it that pleases God; it is what God makes of us which is His joy.

I think everyone remembers, at some point in their lives, running to Mom or Dad when something just went wrong, or we got hurt, or we were treated unfairly – often by our own brothers or sisters. We would say something like, “How can that be fair or right?” Then, we would hear: “Life isn’t always fair.” We go to God a lot with this kind of complaint.

The familiar story about Jacob’s courtship in the Hebrew Scriptures is a fine example. Jacob is outright cheated by his father-in-law, Laban, and ends up working 14 years to finally marry the girl he wants. Of course, Jacob himself ran away to Laban in the first place because his brother, Esau, was furious at him for cheating him out of his birthright blessing. One of his sons, Joseph, ends up being thrown in a pit and sold as a slave to Egyptians by his jealous brothers. Then, he ends up in an Egyptian prison thanks to a spiteful woman.

I would not blame any of them for going to God and saying, “How is this fair or right? How can anything good come out of my suffering, as you Promised?” Out

of all this comes the preservation of God's whole nation so that, when the time is right, Jesus is born to endure even more suffering unfairly and win our salvation with His obedience.

An amazing amount of good comes out of life's mess, a mess God Himself has not refused to involve Himself in. I think my problem is that when I hear God say, "All things work to the good for those that love God," I automatically assume God is saying that I will see that good result right away. Good results are there: Jacob does get the girl, Joseph is reunited in love with his family, and Jesus ascends to heaven to sit at God's right hand. There were no mistakes here, but I need to have my heavenly parent's eternal perspective to appreciate this.

I think the Apostle Paul, who certainly had his share of hard knocks, knew we would need a heavenly point of view to trust that no evil can separate us from the love of God. See, it is not so much that we get angry at God when bad stuff happens; it is not that we think God made a mistake. No, the real trouble is that we start to fear that we ourselves are a mistake!

God saw that coming, too. In Psalm 139:15-16, God tells David to sing a song with the lines: "You are not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book."

And so, when Jesus tells stories of the kingdom of heaven, He speaks of how the tiniest seeds become the largest trees, and how a huge mass of flour can be

transformed by a little leaven. He speaks of hidden treasure, a single pearl worth all that a man has, and Jesus speaks about the great fishing net of heaven gathering a vast harvest for God, both lives good for heaven and those unfit for eternity.

No mistakes, and so it becomes our responsibility to show forth these treasures of God amid the chaos of life. “Oh dear,” I say to myself, “how can I be like those wise scribes?” Let me tell you a parable with a little secret about my sermon preparations.

One day, a sharpshooter was visiting a war-torn village. As the soldier went about the town, he noticed targets all over the fences and trees. Each target, no matter how small, had a bullet hole dead on center. “What an amazing marksman!” the soldier said. “I must meet him.”

After much searching, the sharpshooter eventually discovered that these targets had all been completed by a noticeably young child, one hardly able to lift and fire the rifle in the first place. “Son,” the soldier asked, “tell me your secret, how did you ever get so many perfect bullseyes?”

“It really was easy,” the boy explained, “What I did was fire my gun first, and then I drew the targets around the mark.”

No mistakes there! And so, it can be for us. Point to the only true answer, Jesus Christ. Then, it will not matter how many circles life puts around us. God’s

Word returns to Him fruitful and right on the mark. That Word is Jesus, and if we have Him, then He has us and there is no mistake about that. And the church says:

“Amen!”